~*Treatment Plants*~

Wetlands improve water quality by breaking down, removing, and using nutrients, organic waste, and sediment carried to the wetland by runoff. Pollutants are taken up by the plants and then are slowly released back into nearby bodies of water. Slowly releasing these harmful pollutants minimizes and prevents damage to nearby habitat. Nutrients taken up by the plants are used for metabolic activities. Plants get the nutrients they need and humans receive improved water quality!

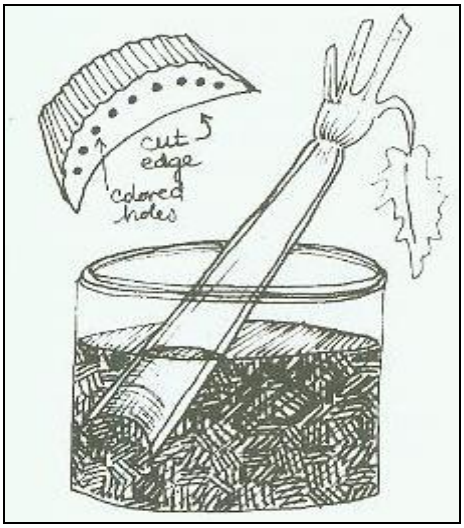
Activity

This activity simulates how wetland plants capture and hold pollutants and nutrients.

Materials needed: fresh celery stalks, with leaves
2 beakers or jars
red or blue food coloring
water
paring knife

Directions:

1. Add several drops of food coloring to a water-filled beaker or jar. The food coloring here represents some form of pollution.
2. Cut off the bottom half-inch of the celery stalk and place the stalk in the water overnight. The colored water will travel up the stalk, showing how plants can absorb pollutants.
3. If the colored water is not visible on the outside of the stalk, cut off a piece of the celery from the bottom. You should see colored dots on the cut surface. These dots are the channels that carried the pollutant up the plant.



WOW! The Wonders Of Wetlands.
Environmental Concern Inc. and the Watercourse